



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Catalytic Converter Thefts Resume**

**SANTA BARBARA, CA – 1/2/2013**

Thefts of catalytic converters are once again occurring throughout the City of Santa Barbara. Recently thefts of catalytic converters from Toyota vehicles parked on the street have occurred on West Islay Street and in the Samarkand area. Several suspects were arrested on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 for committing these thefts, however, due to the participation of unscrupulous scrap metal recycling firms, this crime continues throughout the Central Coast. Although recent crimes have occurred in the noted areas, suspects may prowl any neighborhood in vehicles slowly looking for targets.

A catalytic converter is an emissions control device commonly used in the exhaust systems of vehicles. Catalytic converters are stolen because they contain small amounts of precious metals that are melted down and sold by thieves.

The thefts usually occur during the night, most often after midnight. The suspects will typically park nearby, sometimes in the middle of the street, and then crawl under the targeted vehicle and cut out the catalytic converter. In some instances victims or witnesses have reported hearing the sound of an electric saw being used. There are often several subjects associated with the same vehicle. Vehicles with a raised chassis, like trucks, are often targeted because they are easier to crawl under. Vehicles seen after midnight slowly cruising through neighborhoods or making repeated passes might be suspect.

The community is advised to be vigilant and to report suspicious activity immediately to the Santa Barbara Police Department by calling 911.

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